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ABSTRACT

One of the tasks of school principals in some districts is to provide for an appropriate staff development program. From his own experiences the author argues that adopting commercial marketing techniques is not necessary when convincing the staff of the need for staff development. Instead, making the identification of staff needs and the development of appropriate inservice programs for meeting those needs a matter of staff consensus can encourage staff participation in the process. To prepare for their own participation, principals must tune in to their own leadership styles, recognize the need for administrative guidance in the program, make themselves aware of wider district needs and goals, understand staff development legislation, and find an appropriate model to follow. When working with the staff, principals should alter the model to meet staff wishes, support those who wish to act, provide a forum for the testing of new ideas, utilize evaluation as an ongoing component of the process, and publicize the program's successes. (Author/PGD)

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SELLING YOUR STAFF ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Presentation for

The National Association of Secondary School Principals

Sixty-sixth Annual Convention

Submitted by
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SELLING YOUR STAFF ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. Most principals say that it is no doubt the most important position in the entire school district. The principal is, after all,

a. ultimately responsible for every aspect of the school programs and,
b. directly responsible to set the tone and climate, philosophy of education, and a steady day to day method of operation.

The principal's role has, over the years, necessitated that the principal become "everything to everybody"--dealing effectively with a myrid of tasks and concerns; from attendance to athletics, to xerox and xylophones. Some principals have achieved such a phenomenonal frequency of success in those task areas,-so much to the point that, some are now attempting to feed the lunch time students masses with three fish and a single loaf of bread.

Perhaps, the high success in task involvement has encouraged others to not consider us as mere principals anymore; but instead "Instructional Leaders". As the instructional leader, the principal's role has taken on an even larger scope to include, not only those tasks involving attendance and athletics, but also the involvement of the principal to a greater degree in instructional management and curriculum.

One task of the instructional leader is some districts, is the primary responsibility for recognizing the needs for staff and students; and seeing to it that appropriate training is available to satisfy those needs. This is often accomplished through staff development.

Staff development, like many trends in education, is not new. In fact as early as the 1600's universities employed staff development training as prepartation for elite professionals.

Various states have adopted legislation that promotes staff development at every level of education K-16. The state of Oklahoma, as an example, through H.B. 1706 in essence has mandated that principals become instructional leaders. Staff development through inservice at the building level is one way to assess needs and provide subsequent training activity. As the instructional leader, the principal must become an advocate of staff development.

If it is to be accepted by the building staffs as an effective means to improve the quality of instruction, principals must be prepared to sell their staffs on staff development.

First, principals must acquire knowledge and sharpen existing skills as we prepare to sell the need for quality education through staff development. Realizing that there is no simple formula, no panecea, our sell of staff development is easier said than done; particularly in view of increasing teacher apathy, sporatic surges of vandelism and crime, mounting

criticism, voucher systems, and teacher strikes. These situations represent the fires and obstacles that draw our attention and energy form the real aims and purposes of education.

Even when separate philosophical camps have not been carved our of conflict and crises, principals still fact a challenge as they attempt to sell their staffs on staff development. Some of the difficulty that principals will experience manifests itself through negative or indifference type staff attitudes. Some staff members have been know to ask two questions about staff development that perhaps depict the mood of a certain era; WHAT IS IT? and WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

As principals or instructional leaders, we could tell them that;
...the term "staff development" is quite broad in scope and definition.
...staff development involves planned activities for the instructional imporvement of professional staff and support personnel.

Whether aimed at instructional staff or support personnel, whether called staff development or inservice, GROWTH is the desired effect.

"GROWTH as a result of correcting deficiencies
GROWTH as a result of continual learning
GROWTH to keep pace with change
GROWTH to increase efficiency" [1]
GROWTH TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION!

There is one problem with all of this however. Mere definitions spiced with educational jargon, has never provided the "average teacher in the trenches" with enough information to warrant them to buy into what seems to them to be new fads, yet, principals must somehow sell their staffs on staff development. How do we accomplish this? Must we become proficiant in marketing and advertisement as well as athletics and xylephones?

Ad agencies and marketing firms utilize concepts of selling and adertisement that must capture the eye and interest of prospective clients. They are concerned with spectrums of color and whades as well as symbol manipulation and human psychology. But they too have had their problems in persuading consumers to buy into certain concepts and products.

Should we borrow from their strengths and learn form their short comings?

"One distrubing shortcoming of the marketing industry was the unpredcitability of the prospective customers. Marketers, at one time, repeatedly suffered large losses in campaigns that by all rules of logic, should have succeeded. The method that was used to product trade was known as "nose counting". Use of this method allowed statistic minded marketers to determine, as an example, the percentage of married women ages twenty five to forty two, in Our Town, U.S.A. who said that they wanted and would pay "X" dollars for a particular sales item".[2]

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1 Kennamer, Lorrin Hall, Gene E. Educational Staff Development and it's Implementation: Past, Present, and Future, University of Texas at Austin

2 The Hidden Persuaders, Vance Packard, David McKay Company Inc. N.Y. 1957

Researchers found that there was little relationship between how people would actally behave in buying situations when confronted with the opportunity to really pay for the product.

"Gradually, many perceptive marketers became suspicious and formed three basic assumptions, (in their efforts to be logical), concerning the predictable behavior of human beings especially customers. That determined that;

1. You can't assume that people know what they want or need.

2. You can't assume that people will tell you the truth about their wants, needs or dislikes, even if they know them.

3. It is dangerous to assume that people can be trusted to behave in a rational way." [1]

Do these assumptions have implication for teachers and support staff?

"The Color Research Institute had what it felt was a startling encounter with this proneness to irrationality, when it tested package designs for a new detergent. A test of how consumers were influenced by the package or product was conducted using home makers, and three different boxes filled with identical detergent.

The design for one box was predoninantly yellow. Yellow is considered to provide a strong visual impact. The second box was predominantly blue withoutany yellow, and the third box was blue with splashes of yellow.

Home makers reported that the detergent in the doninant yellow box was excessively strong, and in some instances ruined their clothes. The detergent in the predoninantly blue box was reported to have left clothes dingy and dirty looking. The third box, which contained what the institute felt was an ideal balance of color in the package design, overwhelmingly received favorable responses.

Now, in addition to nose counting, marketers employ various market analysis models to forcast or assess the wants of the consumer. "Regression analysis, judgemental approaches, time series analysis, market surveys and the like. However, despite their enthusiam for sales forcasting, their record is neither clear nor impressive." [2] In fact, successful marketers must possess a certain degree of mental toughness, that comes in handy as they struggle in their efforts to identify wants and needs. In light of this, accurate forcasting of needs is still a wish rather than a fact.

I submit to you that principals, however, need not become ad men or men, nor is there need for them to develop complex skills in marketing. While we can certainly apply knowledge learned through marketing research to various related areas in the field of education, there is one major point of difference.

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1 Ibid

2 Market Research, International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences p. 570

The precictability of consumers needs are precarious and complex. The precictability of staff needs do no have to be precarious or complex, as principals sell their staff on staff development.

I was a new building principal with eight cumulative years of "dues paying" as an assistant principal, guidance counselor, teacher and coach. I was a warm, sincere, zealous administrator, who had recently completed the doctoral degree program. I was firm, decisive and dedicated, (like may of you). For the first time in perhaps my total professional career, the qualities of hard practicality, real life experiences, and a solid therory based foundation of administration came into blend.

Charged with the task of planning and implementing a building level inservice activity, I sought to gather data about specific departmental goals and objectivies and their relationship to a larger district's goals and objectivies. Care was taken to analyze commonaliities, strengths and weaknesses of staff.

Special consideration was given in identifying and selecting highly qualified resource individuals, who delivered their messages with skill and precision. As a fitting conclusion for any good staff development inservice activity, and evaluation was completed by each participant.

Six critical items concerning the value of the inservice activity were presented. The questions were on a scale from 1-9 with 1 being low and 9 being high. The items were as follows;

"1. To what degree was the inservice content appropriate to your needs? (6.2)

2. How adequately did the inservice activity meet your needs? (6.0)

3. How much of the content form the inservice activity do you think will be able to apply immediately? (5.5)

4. How much of the content from the inservice activity do you think will be able to apply in the future? (6.2)

5. How well organized were the inservice activities? (7.8)

6. To what extent were the ideas, techniques, skills etc. presented in the inservice worthwhile to you? (6.3)". [1]

It was apparant that my expectations of high evaluation marks were not fulfilled.

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1. Oklahoma City Public Schools, Inservice Evaluation Instrument

Like successful marketers, successful principals also must posses a certain degree of mental toughness, if we attempt to predict the needs of our staff. This quality really came in handy as I picked my bruised administrative ego off the floor. In an effort to determine what had gone wrong, I retraced my steps. I determined that I had gathered data about departmental goals and objectives; I also determined that I had taken care in analyzing commonalities, strengths and weakness among the staff. Where did I go wrong? I later learned as administrators are learning, that it is nearly impossible to accurately assess the needs of staffs through the use of closed authoritative decision making.

This type of decision making is equivolent to an insurance agent who plans and implements a health and life insurance policy for you, without your imput.

No matter how warm and good our intentions are! No matter qualified we may think we are!- Despite all of the personal attributes that we possess; as principals, we can not second guess the needs of teachers or support staff--and be effective in doing so. This bit of harsh reality refutes the old "Principal as God Role" that many of us have been forced into at one time or the other.

The identification of needs, planning and delivery of appropriate activity, could involve many processes and considerations. It stands to reason that these decisions should involve group processes as a way to achieve them. While principals do not routinely use the democratic process as a means to make daily administrative decisions, the utilization of group consensus is a valuable strategy in building level staff development.

I recently heard a workshop facilitator refer to CONSENSUS as, "a point in time when no one disagrees so serverly that they are not willing to go along with this one, for now, this time."

The attainment of group consensus in staff development decisions, allows two very positive factors to occur.

1. Shared decision making with people directly involved in the activity,

2. Shared responsibility for success or failure.

Shared decision making with people directly involved in the staff development activity can serve as a vechicle for the occurance of some other potentially healthy aspects of group process. (Group cohesiveness and positive communication are two examples).

Shared decision making also allows for shared responsibility for program success or failure; in that the staff develops a more personal vested interest in the inservice organization and evaluation.

All of a sudden the inservice activity becomes the creation of the staff....not the property of the principal. Suddenly, the assessment of staff needs is accurate and defined...not precarious and complex. Suddenly

through group consensus, initiated by the prinicpal, the staff inherits ownership in the staff development concept and activity. For the average "teacher in the trenches", staff development takes on a more operant meaning ...as opposed to a mere textbook definition.

The principal's willingness to use group consensus in making staff development decisions, can provide the impetus for professional growth.

CAN WE FUTHER PROMOTE THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT WITHIN OUR SCHOOLS?? HOW CAN PRINCIPALS FUTHER SELL BUILDING STAFFS ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT??

In an effort to nurture the impetus for professional growth, principals should consider, at least, the following points. Perhaps the hardest sell of all will be the principal, so we begin by SELLING OURSELVES....

1. TUNE IN TO YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP-ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE

   We are all aware of the four basic styles of leadership;

   AUTHORITARIAN The leader is the person who chooses to exercise most of the power and authority in an enterprise or a group.

   LAISSES FAIRE Leadership that is shared to the point of abdication through noninterference.

   DEMOCRATIC Leadership and decision making is shared in an area that encourages participation.

   SITUATIONAL Leadership that is neither all authoritarian, no all democratic, no all laisses faire; but rather combination of each, with the tendency to lean pronouncedly in one direction or the other.[1]

It is apparant that most of us are probably situational in our approach to problem solving and decision making with a slight lean toward the democratic style. This style of leadership allows for flexible transition from some of the daily authoritative type decision making, to shared decision making that is necessary for effective staff development. THE AUTHORITATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLES IN AND OF ITSELF IS NOT CONGRUENT WITH STAFF DEVELOPMENT AIMS OR PURPOSES.

2. REALIZE THE NECESSITY FOR WOVEN ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTO THE FABRIC OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT
   The role of principal in building level staff development activity, planning, should be that of initiator, facilitator, or perhaps a resident scholar. While we must exercise restraint in the nature of our involvement, a high degree of administrative guidance is needed.

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1 Developing Student Leadership in Secondary Public School, Consultative Center for Equal Educational Opportunity, University of Oklahoma, 1977, pp 13-16

Administrative guidance during the critical planning and organizational stages is imparative. There are few substitutes for the blend of hard practicality, and the strong educational theory base that most principals possess.

3. GAIN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE/KNOWLEDGE IN THE FORMATION OF DISTRICT STAFF DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVIES

Building level staff development goals and objectives should reflect the broader goals and objectives of the school district. In districts where the staff development is still in the infant stages, principals direct involvement on advisory and sub-committees can provide valuable insights. The principal's ability to visualise the "big staff development picture, allows for a ready reference in the formation of the building level staff development program.

In districts where staff development programs have been established and are ongoing, principals can benefit from a personal review of district level goals and objectivies.

4. BE AWARE OF THE INTENT OF STATE MANDATED STAFF DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION

In states where legislation mandating staff development exist, or is pending, principals are advised to become cognizant of the intent and motivation that spurred such legislation. While staff development for professional growth and staff development for accountability and evaluation, may arrive at the same end, their means may differ significantly. Staff development for certification, as an example, takes on a certain type of urgency that does not exist when the only requirement for staff development amounts to two negotiated inservice days.

5. SECURE A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE MODEL TO UTILIZE

Various staff development and inservice models are available for building level use, if a larger district model has not been adopted. Study should be given as principals and staff representatives examine serval prospective models for consideration. Models should be considered for their adaptability to specific staff characteristics and needs.

The following five points represents some of the interaction, motivations and leadership that principals may employ in an effort to finish to seli...

II. SELLING YOU STAFF

6. ATTEND TO WHERE TEACHERS ARE

Principals generally fail to take this important factor into consideration. Once securing a model for staff development, we

often feel obligated to methodically follow it step by step. Once comfortable with a staff development process model, principals and staff representativies should consider omitting steps that might appear unnecessary or redundant. "Most staff members want meaningfull activity that provide for immediate application in the classroom or work place." [1]

Teachers most often report the need for developmental growth rather than remediation." Principals utlizing group cencensus as a means of staff development decision making, generally have little difficulty in completing this task.

7. PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO ACT

It is realistic to not expect every teacher or support staff to embrace the staff development concept. Nevertheless, being the most influential individual in the school; the principal can provide valuable support for those staff members who exercise initative in the bulding level staff development effort. In addition to moral support and professional encouagement, principals should be prepared to provide financial resources as well. Time off from the school day for appropriate staff to plan inservices, visit related exemplary programs, etc. are examples of administrative support. It is unrealistic to expect all teachers and support staff to embrace the staff development concept, however, overtime, others responding to surface benefits, will buy into similiar "professional" growth activities.

8. PROVIDE A FORUM FOR TEACHERS WHO TEST NEW IDEAS

Moral support, professional encouragement, and financial resources are some of the primary means by which principals can provide positive support. Staff members who demonstrate interest and skill in testing new ideas, must also have assess to a platform from which they can exhibit their findings. Adequate time during special staff meetings, district committee assignments, and demonstration sessions in state and local professional meetings, can provide additional professional growth opportunities for teachers and staff who test new ideas.

9. PROVIDE EVALUATION

Evaluations used as a positive, yet critical means to measure staff development achievements, can serve to perpetuate future professional growth. "Whether completed by teachers, students, or even parents, evaluations provide a reality test of staff efforts or program effectiveness." [2]

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1 Staff Development, Staff Liberation, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Edited by Charles W. Beegle and Roy A. Edelfelt, 1977

2 Ibid

Principals should utlize evaluation as an ongoing component of the staff development model and concept.

10. PUBLICIZED SUCCESSES

As teachers and support staff buy into the staff development concept and various staff development activities, principals should take every appropriate opportunity to disseminate information within the local community. Newsletters to parents, civic meetings, school newspapers, memoes to secondary director or superintendent, all provide a mechanism for positive reporting and communication. The acknowledgement of exemplary programs and creative individual efforts, influences an atmosphere for continued growth.

As I conclude, the principal as instructional leader characterized as a dynamic, super competent, caring, resourceful, highly educated individual. Inasmuch, the effectiveness of a leader is evaluated in terms of the performance of the group being lead.

If staff development training can truely assist building level teachers and support staff

to provide opportunities for self renewal
to bridge the gap between preservice preparation and the real world of action in the schools,
to develop human skills,
to correct deficiencies;

If staff development training can effectively assist building level teachers and support staff

to aid in the implementation of innovations
to develop additional technical skills
to keep pace with change
or to increase efficiency,

then principals are ethically compelled to accept, support, and embrace staff development as a means to obtain QUALITY EDUCATION. Principals are challenged to not approach the staff development concept as "just something else to do along with the many tasks and concerns that we already have. Instead, principals must become advocates of the concept and throrough in it's application to solve building level problems. As principals sell themselves on staff development...they also sell their staffs.

Staff development equals continuous growth, equals quality education equals OUR PRIORITY FOR PROGRESS.